(b) if so, the steps being taken to prevent any mishap or collapse of the towers and to make the Taj more tourist friendly; and

(c) the steps taken so far to cleanse the environment around the Taj and to protect the monument against dense chemical fumes emitted by the metal casting factories and other air polluting units?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Survey of India has carried out periodical surveys to check verticality of the four minarets of Taj Mahal since 1941 and recently Geodetic and Research Branch of Survey of India has carried out studies and observations of verticality of minarets in March 2005. Their report is awaited.

From the triangulation, traverse and leveling data, Survey of India has concluded that the dome and four minarets of Taj Mahal remained quite stable in plan as well as in elevation from 1940 to 1994.

Under the NCF project steps have been initiated to facilitate smooth tourist flow. Besides the signages and other visitor amenities are being provided to make the Taj more tourist friendly. In addition the night viewing on full moon nights has been introduced.

(c) As per the directions of Hon'ble Supreme Court, measures like shifting of polluting units and industries have been taken in the past. More recent measures include development of a green belt in the vicinity of Taj Mahal which will improve the ambience and contain the level of pollutions. This work is in progress.

Besides the Archaeological Survey of India and the Central Pollution Control Board are constantly monitoring the level of air pollutants to keep a watch on the ambient air quality.

Development of Ancient Cultures

3250. SHRI T.T.V. DHINKARAN: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of schemes implemented by Government for developing and preserving the ancient cultures of the country;

(b) whether Government have launched any scheme/project for promotion of the culture of minorities living in Delhi; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) One of the key functions of this Ministry is to preserve the ancient culture of the country. The Archaeological Survey of India undertakes excavations of historical sites and conservation of ancient monuments. The archaeological findings and excavated artifacts are rich sources to understand our ancient history and culture.

The Anthropological Survey of India, Kolkata and Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya, Bhopal are engaged in the study of the culture and lifestyle of the people of India from ancient times.

The Akademies under the Ministry of Culture are autonomous bodies which foster not only contemporary art forms and cultural expressions and literature but also encourage the study of ancient culture and tradition. The 7 Zonal Cultural Centres are primarily doing work in the area of folk and traditional art forms. The Scheme of financial support to tribal culture is yet another initiative to encourage ancient and traditional culture.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Conservation of National Monuments

3251. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any policy for conservation of National Monuments;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Certain monuments are declared to be of national importance under the provisions of AM&ASR Act 1958. The Archaeological Survey of India is responsible for the protection, conservation, preservation and environmental development of such monuments.

(c) Does not arise.